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### Review

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*Caiaphas the High Priest*. By Adele Reinhartz. (Studies on Personalities of the New Testament). Columbia (SC): University of South Carolina Press, 2011. Pp. x, 254. Cloth with dust jacket. US\$49.95. ISBN 978-1-57003-946-1.

Although he was the longest-serving High Priest of the first century, Joseph Caiaphas left very little in the historical record. Most references come from Christian authors, more concerned with telling their story of Jesus than providing an accurate portrait of Caiaphas. Even Josephus fails to supply any information about him, except for the bare facts that he was appointed around 19 CE and deposed in 37. Small wonder, then, that Adele Reinhartz's book is not primarily concerned with reconstructing the 'historical Caiaphas,' but focuses rather on his literary and aesthetic afterlives, his 'adventures in literature, art, drama and film' (202). We are introduced to Caiaphas in the writings of the church fathers, in twentieth century fiction, and in mystery plays (both mediaeval and at Oberammergau). Reinhartz deftly exposes the anti-semitism which runs through many of these incarnations, and does an excellent job of showing the plasticity of Caiaphas and the imaginative gap-filling of the artists and writers who re-invented him over the centuries.

Reinhartz does, however, offer some thoughts on the 'historical Caiaphas' and his involvement in the death of Jesus, and these are crucial in terms of how she sees the development of the tradition. Against the general trend of much recent Jesus research, Reinhartz claims that there is no evidence that it was Jesus' demonstration in the Temple that led to his death. There was no expectation that Caiaphas should maintain order in Jerusalem, she argues, no indication that he feared for the Temple and its cult, and no suggestion that he was concerned for his own authority. The High Priest may have been disturbed by Jesus, but this stemmed from the Galilean preacher's popularity with the crowds. 'In the end,' she asserts, 'there is no clear evidence for [Caiaphas'] direct or even indirect involvement in the events leading to Jesus' death.' (179).

Two comments need to be made here. The first concerns Jesus' demonstration in the Temple. Reinhartz's case is seriously weakened by Mk 11.18, which makes the connection between Jesus' action and his arrest explicit, and also by Mk 14.58, which brings a Temple charge into Jesus' Jewish trial. Of course, the historicity of Mark's trial narrative is seriously questionable, but it is interesting that the motif of destroying the Temple appears both here and at the cross (Mk 15.30), suggesting that a link between Jesus' death and the Temple belongs to an early strand of Christian memory. Even John, who locates the Temple incident differently, ends his account with a reference to Jesus' death (Jn 2.19-22). And we have clear evidence from the story of Jesus ben Ananias that speaking (let alone acting) against the Temple could get a person handed over to Rome (Josephus, *War* 6.300-309). We cannot *prove* that Jesus was arrested because of his outburst in the Temple, but what evidence we have is comparatively strong.

Second is Reinhartz's attempt to divorce Caiaphas from Jesus' arrest and execution. The final chapters of Mark's Gospel chart the plots of the high/chief priests: how they conspire to kill Jesus after the Temple incident (11.18), question his authority (11.27-8), try to arrest him (12.12), meet to plan his arrest (14.1-2) and enlist the help of Judas (14.10-11). In Reinhartz's opinion, however, none of these references include Caiaphas; he is in view only when the arresting party lead Jesus to 'the High Priest' in

14.53, when he stands up to question Jesus in 14.61, and when he tears his garments and declares Jesus a blasphemer in 14.64-5. Caiaphas is never named by Mark; for Reinhartz he is present only when the singular *ho archiereus* is used, and never as part of the plural *hoi archiereis*. This allows her to distance Caiaphas from Jesus' chief priestly opponents; while the latter plot Jesus' death, Caiaphas is a 'neutral figure' in Mark, who appears only in the final courtroom scene. The same is true for Matthew; though here she needs to argue, more awkwardly, that the High Priest was not involved even though the plotters quite clearly met in his house (Mt 26.1-5)! And Luke omits the High Priest (though we still have *archiereis*), suggesting not that Luke retains material from the Markan trial to use in the proceedings against Stephen (as is often supposed), but rather than the evangelist inherited a tradition in which the High Priest played no part.

But how likely is it that Mark's readers would have seen a distinction between the chief/high priests (*hoi archiereis*) and the High Priest (*ho archiereus*)? If the Evangelist had had any intention of distancing the High Priest from the actions of the chief/high priests, he could surely have done so much more effectively. He makes it quite clear, for example, that Pilate knew that the chief priests handed Jesus over out of jealousy (15.10); although the prefect is hardly exonerated by this detail, it does create some space between Jesus' priestly opponents and the Roman governor.

These observations lead Reinhartz to conclude that Caiaphas' reputation underwent a drastic change some time between the writing of the gospels and the church fathers: 'No longer the neutral, if strategic and dramatic, high priest, he was now the wicked Christ-killer, the enemy of all Christians everywhere' (52). This 'neutral' portrait is the benchmark against which subsequent images of Caiaphas are measured, and in the majority of cases found wanting. Of course, if Caiaphas is to be included in 'the chief priests' this neutral portrait evaporates, and Caiaphas' depiction in the gospels is not substantially different to those of the church fathers. In the end, the likely legacy of Reinhartz' beautifully written and hugely enjoyable book will be in its contribution to the study of Caiaphas' many afterlives.